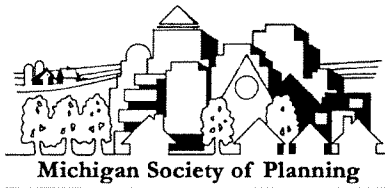


Michigan Society of Planning



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MSP exists so that Michigan will consist of healthy, safe, attractive, and successful communities that are built first and foremost on quality community planning.

MSP is a Member-based Organization Serving . . .

- Professional Planners
- Local Appointed Officials like Planning Commissioners and Zoning Board of members
- Local Elected Officials like Township Board members, City or Village Council members, County Commissioners.

We also serve . . .

- Developers and Home Builders
- Ancillary Professionals like architects, landscape architects, attorneys, engineers
- Students

What We Do

Education
Information
Advocacy

Education

- Educational workshops for both local officials and professional community planners
- Annual conference that attracts up to 600 attendees
- Annual Legislative Assembly, May 4, 2005 at the Lansing Radisson, followed by a legislative reception at the Lansing Center

Information

- Our Web Page www.planningmi.org
- Original Educational Publications such as the New Directions Report and the Planning Commissioner's Toolkit
- Our *Smart Growth Tactics* series, with topics culled from the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council (MLULC) Final Report

Advocacy

- Michigan's planning and zoning legislation drives development patterns; we support laws that result in balanced growth.
- MSP can serve as an honest broker between organizations with sometimes conflicting goals.
- We are the sole organization that can provide objective, balanced information

Advocacy

- We promote best planning practices by advancing new ways of thinking and doing things in Michigan.

What MSP Can Do for Michigan's Legislators

- Serve as an "honest broker" between myriad interest groups with often differing perspectives.
- Provide technical information about land use and planning.
- Provide resources and research about best planning practices that will result in better land use decisions.

Michigan Land Use Leadership Council Report

- Bi-partisan consideration of land use in Michigan, the first endeavor of this kind in decades.
- Identified more than 150 specific recommendations for change
- Many recommendations accomplished or underway
- Much work still to be done

Barriers to Better Land Development Decisions

- Home Rule. There are over 1,850 municipalities making independent decisions that lack coordination with other adjacent municipalities.
- Outdated Planning, Zoning and Land Division Acts
- Private Property rights versus Municipal Vision and Money

Barriers

- Lack of education for local decision makers (planning commissioners and elected officials). Many locals make decisions without consideration for the permanent, far reaching and often irrevocable consequences of their actions.

Solutions

To Home Rule and Fragmented Government Decisions:

Intergovernmental or Regional Cooperation

Intergovernmental/Regional Cooperation

- There already exist many laws which enable cooperation
 - Joint Planning Commission Act
 - Act 425, annexation and sharing resources

Why Regional Cooperation is Important

- Diminishing municipal resources as a result of revenue sharing cuts creates financial struggles for local government
- Duplication of services (provision of utilities, solid waste removal, parks and recreation services) wastes time and money
- Economies of scale can be realized

Areas Where Cooperation Can Be Applied

- Land Use Planning. P.A. 226 of 2003, the Joint Municipal Planning Acts, allows local jurisdictions to create joint planning commissions, looking at participating communities broadly.
- P.A. 405 of 2003: provides that a municipality participating in a joint planning commission does not have to provide for every type of land use if that type of land use is provided for in another municipality participating within the same joint planning commission.

Opportunities for Cooperation

- Infrastructure such as water and waste water.
- School location and design. Garcia and LaJoy have introduced legislation requiring that schools be subject to zoning like any other land use. Schools ability to locate anywhere has driven development outward, leaving core communities struggling to maintain their student base.

Opportunities for Cooperation

- Economic Development. Senator Allen's Commerce Center Legislation, if it includes incentives for communities to work together, could have a positive impact.
- Urban Redevelopment. The Michigan Suburbs Alliance's (MSA) Redevelopment Readiness Program shows real promise, as it works to help inner ring suburbs be more competitive with growing exurbs.

Opportunities for Cooperation

- Parks and Recreation. The Metro Parks System is an excellent example of a regional park system, but even when two communities share recreation resources, financial saving and land preservation can be realized.
- Housing Development. Channeling development to areas with existing infrastructure through density bonuses can create healthy urban areas while preserving farmland and open space. Rep Walkers Farmland Bill could contribute to success, and compliment, density bonus legislation.

Solutions to Outdated Planning, Zoning, and Land Division Statutes

- Unify Zoning Enabling Acts. Rep Elsenheimer introduced HB 4398
- Unify Planning Enabling Acts. Senator Birkholz is interested in picking this up
- Update the land division element of the Land Division Act.

Solutions to Private Property rights versus Municipal Vision and Money

- Required Comprehensive Planning
- Impact fees and concurrency
- Contract Zoning

Solutions for lack of education for local decision makers (planning commissioners, ZBA members, and elected officials).

- Mandatory training for Planning and Zoning Officials (6 States have mandatory training requirements)
- Create on-line training for officials (MSUE and MSP are partnering on this venture)
- Form coalitions among education providers to reduce duplication of services and reach more individuals

There is Hope

- We have a Michigan Legislature increasingly committed to land use issues
- We have citizens committed to making their communities successful
- We have coalitions of diverse, interested and committed stakeholder groups working to negotiate solutions to land use patterns that are increasingly problematic.

